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Baby Shower for Eva Roy Olson, daughter of Nick and Stephanie Olson, will be held Wednesday, Dec. 2, 2015, at Emmanuel Lutheran Church, Groton, from 6 p.m. to 7:30 p.m. Eva was born October 7, 2015. They are registered at Target.

Class A Academic All-State VB Team

Marlee Jones and Carly Wheeting have been named to the Class A Academic All-State Volleyball Team by the South Dakota Volleyball Coaches Association.

Open: Recycling Trailer in Groton
The recycling trailer is located at 10 East Railroad Ave.

The cardboard/paper

recycling trailer at the school is **Open**

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Monday, November 30

School Breakfast: Breakfast bagel, fruit, juice, milk.

School Lunch: Chili, corn bread, carrots and dip, fruit.

Senior Menu: Meatballs, mashed potatoes and gravy, carrots, fruit cocktail, whole wheat bread.

Birthdays: Tanner Johnson • Jesse Anderson • Denny Davies

6:30am: Emmanuel Lutheran Bible Study

7:00pm: Winter Sports Parent-Athlete Meeting

Tuesday, December 1

Lisa Sippel Novice Debate in Groton after school Practice ACT at GHS

School Breakfast: Pancake on stick, fruit, juice, milk.

School Menu: Meatballs, baked potato, tea buns, mixed vegetables, fruit.

Senior Menu: Chili, cornbread, coleslaw, lime pear Jell-O.

Birthdays: Darrel Hendrickson • Ahmad Shabazz Jr • Kevin Raap

10:00am: United Methodist Women's Bible Study

6:30pm: 7th GBB host Clark/Willow Lake

7:30pm: 8th GBB host Clark/Willow Lake

Wednesday, December 2

School Breakfast: Cereal, yogurt, fruit, juice, milk.

School Lunch: Chicken nuggets, sweet potato fries, romaine salad, breadstick, fruit.

Senior Menu: Baked chicken, baked potato with sour cream, green beans, chocolate cake, whole wheat bread.

Birthdays: Leonard Garness • Liz Doeden • Cade Guthmiller • Meri Erickson

7:00am: United Methodist Men's Bible Study

12:00pm: Kiwanis meets at the Community Center



Snow Prince/Princess at Snow Queen Contest



Adam Franken, the master of ceremony, interviewed each of the Snow Prince and Snow Princess candidates. Pictured left to right are Shaydon Wood, Easton Weber, Owen Sperry, Treyton Smith, T.C. Schuster, Jace Johnson, Braeden Flihs, Cameron Feist, John Bisbee, Journey Zieroth, Chesney Weber, Taryn Thompson, Sydney Locke, Kyleigh Kroll, Makenna Krause, Ella Kettner, Addison Hoeft, Meleana Hagenson and Ryelle Gilbert.



The Snow Prince on the left is Treyton Smith, son of Jeremy and Missi Smith.

The Snow Princess on the right is Chesney Weber, daughter of Jeremy and Samantha Weber.



Talent Show



Madeline Schuelke placed first in the junior division with her solo entitled, "Try."



Anna Bisbee placed second in the junior division with her solo entitled, "How Great Thou Art."



Aubray Harry placed second in the senior division with her solo entitled, "Angel."



Kari Hanson was a contestant in the senior division with her solo entitled, "She Used To Be Mine."



Audrey Wanner placed first in the senior division with her solo entitled, "Dear Future Husband."

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Cody Swanson ran the sound system at the Snow Queen Contest.



The 2015 Snow Queens were visiting during the intermission. They are Senior Snow Queen Kaitlin O'Neill and Junior Snow Queen Jessica Bjerke.

The lucky winner of the \$25 was Sydney Erickson for guessing Frosty. It was Jerry Locke. The Frosty guard is Steve Giedt.



Groton Area Snow Queens Chosen



Alexis Simon, daughter of Nick and Jamie Simon, was chosen as the 2016 Groton Area Junior Snow. First runnerup was AnneMarie Smith and second runnerup was Taylor Holm.



Kelsey Iverson, daughter of Karry Iverson and the late John Iverson, was chosen as Miss Congeniality.



Jasmine Schaller, daughter of Steven Schaller and Julie Schaller, was named the 2016 Groton Area Senior Snow Queen.



The reigning queens are Senior Snow Queen Jasmine Schaller and Junior Snow Queen Alexis Simon.



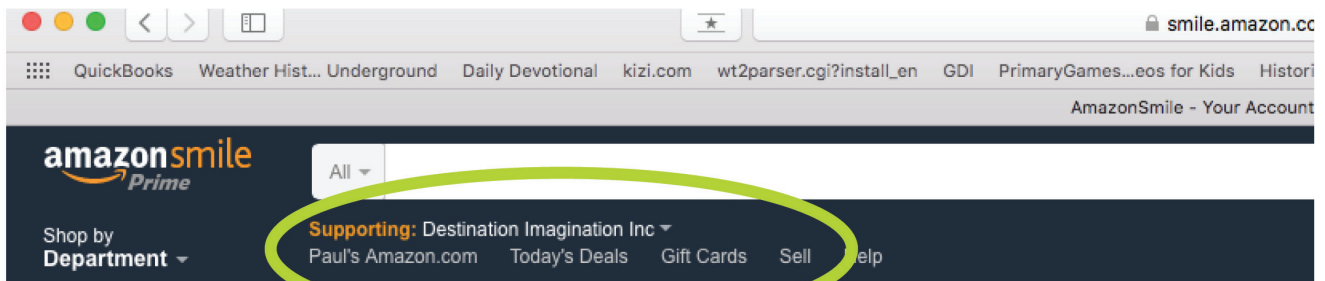
Allison Weber, daughter of Mike and Lorrie Weber, was named second runnerup, and Marlee Jones, daughter of Jim and Mindy Jones, was chosen as first runnerup.

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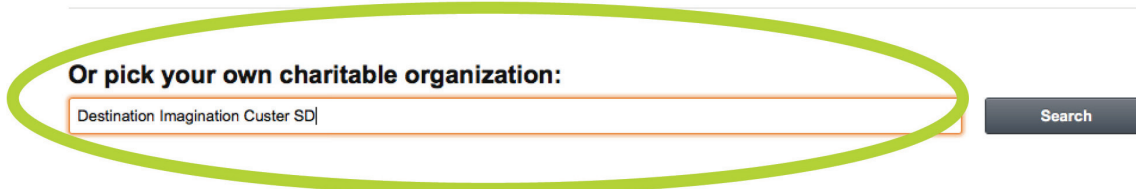
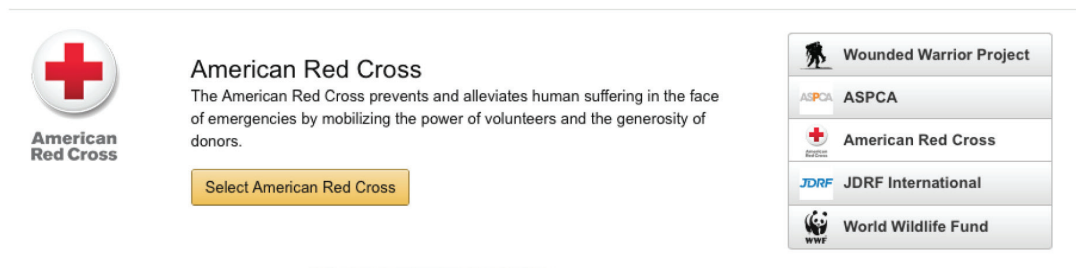
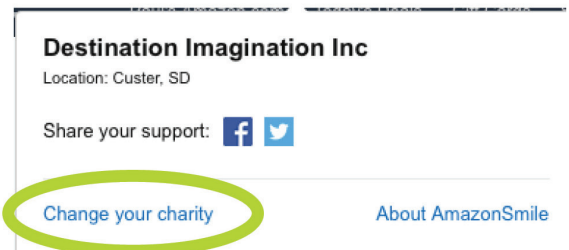
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Getting ready for your holiday shopping? Start at smile.amazon.com and select Destination Imagination of Custer, SD as your charity. A portion of your purchase will support South Dakota Destination Imagination. What could be easier?



When you go to smile.amazon.com, and you are logged in, there will be a SUPPORTING as circled above. Click on that and there will be a pop-up window as shown on the right. Click on Change your Charity. Then as shown below, type in Destination Imagination Custer SD, then click on Search. On the next screen, your selection will appear. Click Select.



REMEMBER - SHOP at SMILE.AMAZON.COM. If you shop at Amazon.com, we will not get anything. This is very important as most of us have Amazon.com as our bookmark.

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Groton Chamber Holiday Boxes are out & about in Groton!

This Week (thru 11/27) – Groton Ford
\$25 Chamber Bucks OR Free Oil Change!

Next Week (thru 12/04) – Dairy Queen
\$25 Chamber Bucks OR 10" Ice Cream Cake!

Stop by each participating business and register for \$25
Groton Chamber Bucks – or a prize supplied by the business.
Prizes will be drawn weekly – starting over each week with
entries!



Merry
Christmas

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Today in Weather History

November 30, 1981: A two-day winter storm, beginning as rain, changing to freezing rain and then to snow, completely paralyzed the eastern half of South Dakota, as well as west central Minnesota Monday, November 30 through Tuesday, December 1, 1981. Snow accumulations of between eight and twelve inches were common in South Dakota. Wind with gusts to near 50 mph whipped the snow into blizzard conditions. The Governor of South Dakota closed east-west Interstate 90 to all traffic. Hundreds of motorists were stranded. One person died during snow removal after the storm. Some storm total snowfall amounts included 8 inches at Kennebec, 7 inches at Pierre and Faulkton, 4 inches at Aberdeen, and 2 inches at Watertown. The winter precipitation was caused by a storm center that moved from Kansas Monday through Iowa Monday night and into Wisconsin Tuesday morning, December 1st. The same storm produced heavy snow and blizzard conditions over a large area of the central Plains. Travel was especially difficult because of the snow. Many roads were impassible and motorists were forced to find shelter.

November 30, 1991: The third major winter storm of the season moved from the central plains to eastern South Dakota. The storm generally dropped between 4 and 8 inches of snow over the eastern third of South Dakota from the 28th to the 30th. New snow accumulations of 2 to 5 inches occurred over most of the rest of the state. Some specific snow reports across the area included Aberdeen with 2 inches and Watertown with 3 inches. Five inches fell at Clear Lake and 3 inches fell near Summit. Strong winds developed after the snow fell, producing widespread blowing and drifting snow, especially across the northeast corner of South Dakota.

November 30, 2000: Heavy snow of 6 to 12 inches fell across a large part of northern South Dakota and into western Big Stone County in Minnesota, causing travel problems and school closings. Several accidents also occurred due to the slippery roads. Some snowfall amounts included 6 inches at Milbank and Ortonville; 8 inches at McLaughlin, Ipswich, Summit, and Mellette; 9 inches northwest of Britton, Clear Lake, and Pollock; 10 inches at Leola and Faulkton; 11 inches at Aberdeen and Webster; and 12 inches at Houghton.

1875 - A severe early season cold wave set November records in the northeastern U.S. The temperature dipped to 5 above zero at New York City, 2 below at Boston MA, and 13 below at Eastport ME. (David Ludlum)

1957 - Lee slope winds enhanced by Hurricane Nina gusted to 82 mph at Honolulu, Hawaii, a record wind gust for that location. Wainiha, on the island of Kauai, was deluged with 20.42 inches of rain, and 35 foot waves pounded some Kauai beaches, even though the eye of the hurricane was never within 120 miles of the islands. (30th-1st) (The Weather Channel)

1967 - A record November snowstorm struck the Washington D.C. area. It produced up to a foot of snow in a 12 hour period. (David Ludlum)

1976 - MacLeod Harbor, AK, reported a precipitation total for November of 70.99 inches, which established a state record for any month of the year. (The National Weather Summary)

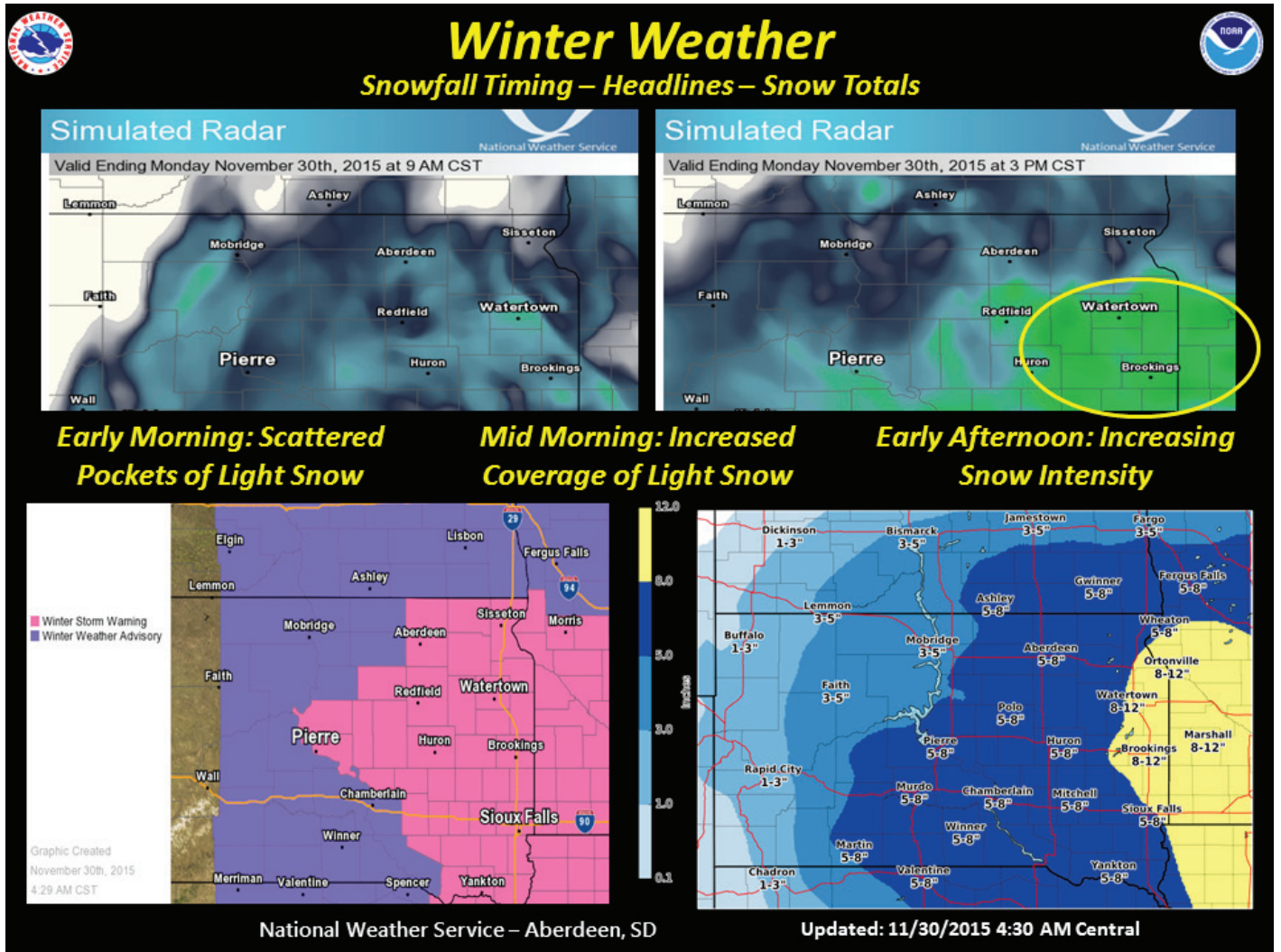
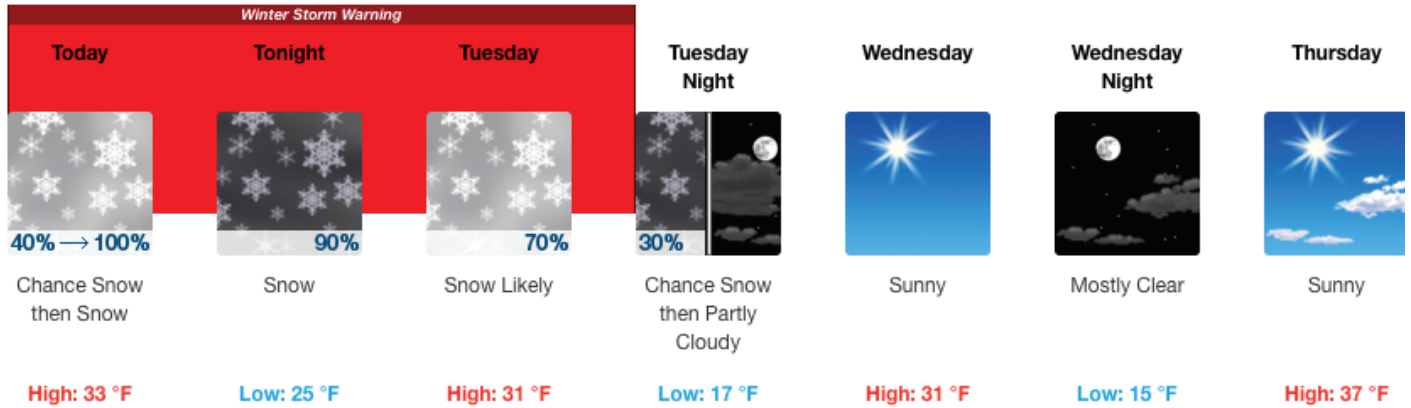
1987 - Showers produced heavy rain in the northeastern U.S. Up to three inches of rain drenched the Brandywine Creek Basin of Pennsylvania, and rainfall totals in Vermont ranged up to two inches at Dorsett. Snow fell heavily across Upper Michigan as gale force winds prevailed over Lake Superior. A storm moving into the northwestern U.S. produced gale force winds along the northern and central Pacific coast. (The National Weather Summary) (Storm Data)

1988 - Snow in the Upper Great Lakes Region pushed the precipitation total for the month at Marquette, MI, past their previous November record of 7.67 inches. Santa Anna winds in southern California gusted to 75 mph at Laguna Peak. (The National Weather Summary) (Storm Data)

1989 - Squalls produced heavy snow in the Lower Great Lakes Region, with 15 inches reported at Chaffee, NY, and at Barnes Corners NY. Tropical Storm Karen drenched parts of Cuba with heavy rain. Punta Del Este reported fourteen inches of rain in 24 hours. (The National Weather Summary) (Storm Data)

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We will see increasing coverage of light snow through the morning - and more widespread accumulating snow by the afternoon with the first wave of precipitation. There may be a lull this evening/overnight for eastern South Dakota - but another band of snow will push in early Tuesday morning and persist through the day.

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Yesterday's Weather

High: 37.2 at 2:08 PM

Low: 28.4 at 5:16 AM

High Gust: 13 at 10:40 AM

Precip: 0.00

Today's Info

Record High: 55° in 1951

Record Low: -26° in 1964

Average High: 32°F

Average Low: 12°F

Average Precip in Nov.: 0.71

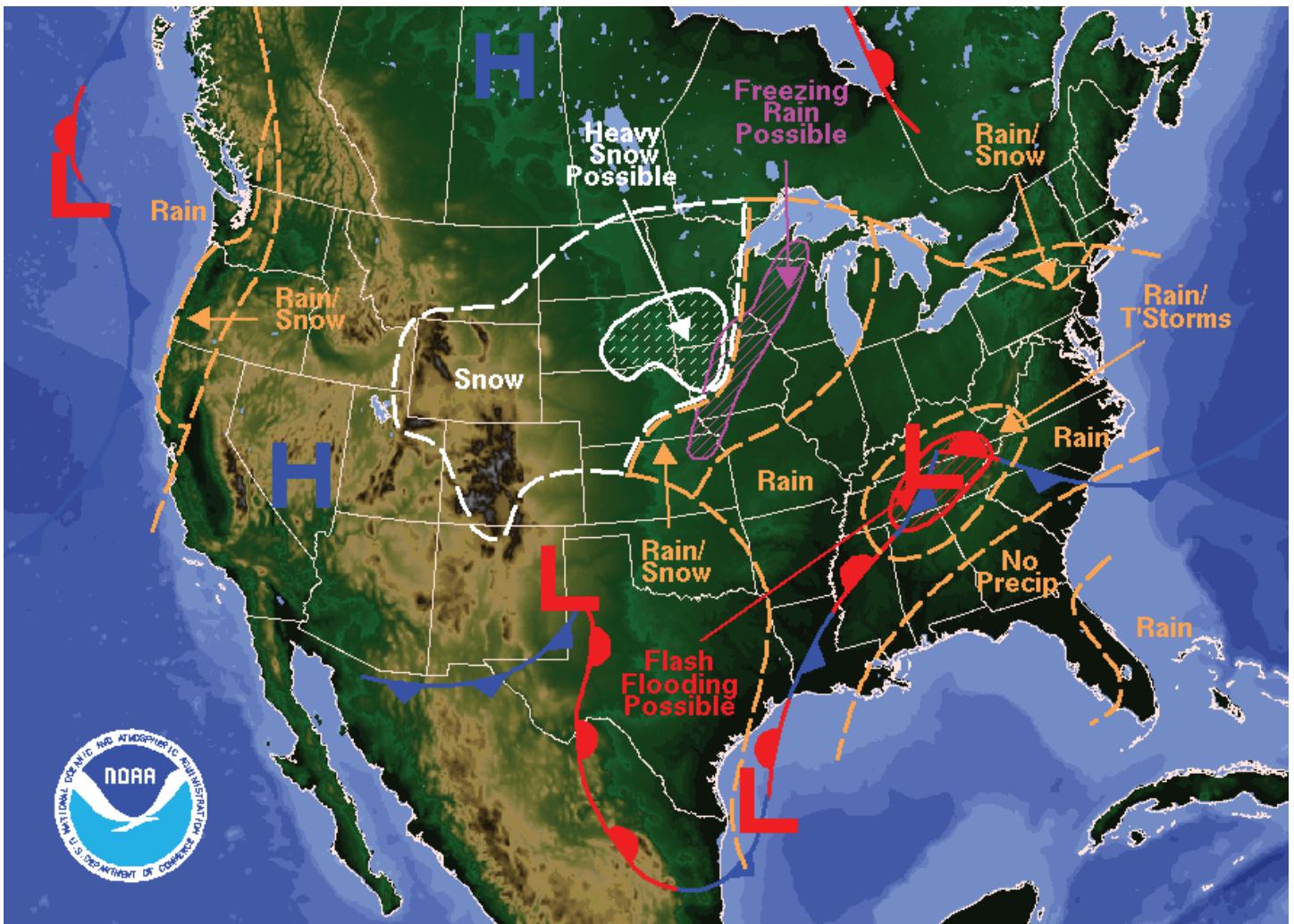
Precip to date in Nov.: 0.71

Average Precip to date: 21.18

Precip Year to Date: 19.82

Sunset Tonight: 4:53 p.m.

Sunrise Tomorrow: 7:51 a.m.



Weather Forecast for Mon, Nov 30, 2015, issued 4:44 AM EST
DOC/NOAA/NWS/NCEP/Weather Prediction Center
Prepared by McCreynolds based on WPC, SPC and NHC forecasts

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THINK, THEN TALK

A witness had been called to testify. As he spoke, the judge listened very carefully. At one point he said, "I think, your Honor..."

The judge immediately stopped him and said, "We don't care what you think. Simply tell us the facts!"

"But, your Honor," he said "I can't talk without thinking."

What a difference a word makes. And what a different world this would be if our minds were filled with kind and gracious thoughts. It is a known fact that what we think about is what we say and what we do. Our words and actions show others our thoughts and feelings.

We get some great advice from Paul. He said that we are to "fix our thoughts on what is true...honorable...right...pure...lovely...admirable...excellent...and worthy of praise."

Whenever we speak harsh words about others or do unkind deeds toward others it comes from the thoughts we have stored up in our mind about them. It is so easy to program our thoughts with the opposite of what Paul wrote. When we watch the news, read newspapers or magazines or even talk to friends, kind words on noble deeds are rarely the main topic of conversation.

Paul set the standard for the way Christians are to think and act. What keeps you from following his advice?

Prayer: Help us, Father, to fill our minds with things that are pleasing to You so that we reflect Your grace. In Jesus' Name. Amen.

Scripture for Today: Philippians 4:8-9 if there is any virtue and if there is anything praiseworthy—meditate on these things.

News from the Associated Press

'12 Days of Christmas' items top \$34K, up 0.6 percent

JOE MANDAK, Associated Press

PITTSBURGH (AP) — Lords a-leaping is the U.S. economy slow to recover!

The cost of 10 lords a-leaping increased 3 percent over last year, but nine of the other 12 gifts listed in the carol "The Twelve Days of Christmas" stayed the same price as last year, according to the 32nd annual PNC Wealth Management Christmas Price Index released Monday.

The index is a whimsical way the Pittsburgh-based bank tracks inflation.

The set of gifts spelled out in the final verse of the song would cost \$34,131 this year, or 0.6 percent more than the adjusted 2014 price of \$33,933. PNC decided to adjust the historic prices of turtle doves and swans after realizing the prices quoted by vendors didn't reflect the birds' overall value on the open market over the years.

"The headline, I think, is that inflation in this economy, with the sort of tepid recovery we've seen, is almost nonexistent," said Jim Dunigan, chief investment officer of PNC's asset management group.

While the good news is that the price of consumer goods isn't rising very much, it also means demand for those goods is down, at least partly due to wage stagnation.

The government's Consumer Price Index has pegged inflation at about 0.2 percent, Dunigan said.

The only other items to increase in price since last year were a partridge in a pear tree and two turtle doves.

The bird in the bush rose 3.5 percent overall, mostly because partridges now cost \$25 each, up from \$20, because partridges are increasingly popular as gourmet food. Pear trees inched up from \$188 to just under \$190.

Turtle doves increased 11.5 percent, from \$260 to \$290, mostly due to increased grain prices that pushed up feed costs.

The lords a-leaping are more expensive because labor costs increased their price from \$5,348 to \$5,509.

PNC calculates the prices from sources including retailers, bird hatcheries and two Philadelphia dance groups, the Pennsylvania Ballet and Philadanco.

A buyer who purchased all the items each time they are mentioned in the song would spend \$155,407.18.

The full set of prices:

- Partridge, \$25; last year: \$20
- Pear tree, \$190; last year: \$188
- Two turtle doves, \$290; last year: \$260
- Three French hens, \$182; last year: same
- Four calling birds (canaries), \$600; last year: same
- Five gold rings, \$750; last year: same
- Six geese-a-laying, \$360; last year: same
- Seven swans a-swimming, \$13,125; last year: same
- Eight maids a-milking, \$58; last year: same
- Nine ladies dancing (per performance), \$7,553; last year: same
- 10 lords a-leaping (per performance), \$5,508; last year: \$5,348
- 11 pipers piping (per performance), \$2,635; last year: same
- 12 drummers drumming (per performance), \$2,855; last year: same

State regulators set to decide on Dakota Access Pipeline

PIERRE, S.D. (AP) — State regulators are weighing whether to grant a construction permit for a pipeline that will cross through South Dakota as it carries North Dakota oil to Illinois.

The South Dakota Public Utilities Commission is set to discuss the 1,130-mile Dakota Access Pipeline at

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a meeting on Monday.

The project would move at least 450,000 barrels of crude daily from the Bakken oil patch in western North Dakota through South Dakota and Iowa to a hub in Illinois.

Supporters of the project say it will create jobs, help with energy security and transport oil more safely. Opponents are concerned about possible harm to the environment and wildlife.

The panel is set to decide whether to grant a construction permit, grant a permit with conditions or deny a permit.

Winter storm to dump heavy snow on parts of the Dakotas

SIoux FALLS, S.D. (AP) — A winter storm is expected to dump up to 10 inches of snow in eastern South Dakota, with lesser but still measurable amounts in central South Dakota and southern North Dakota.

The National Weather Service has posted storm warnings and advisories for the region through Tuesday. Forecasters say snow and blustery winds could cause hazardous conditions for motorists, with slick roads and reduced visibilities.

Weather service meteorologist Greg Gust says the heaviest snowfall is expected to fall from eastern South Dakota into southwestern Minnesota.

The storm was disrupting events even before the snow began falling. Northern State University in Aberdeen canceled a women's basketball game set for Monday night and rescheduled a men's game for an hour earlier.

Man faces aggravated assault charge in Huron stabbing

HURON, S.D. (AP) — A man faces an aggravated assault charge in a non-fatal stabbing at an apartment building in Beadle County.

Officers with the Huron Police Department and the Beadle County Sheriff's Office responded to a report of a stabbing at an apartment building in Huron at about 12:20 p.m. Saturday.

A 28-year-old man was found with a stab wound to the waist line area. He was taken to a hospital and is expected to recover.

The Huron Police Department says it has identified 71-year-old John Lanier Jr. as a suspect in the stabbing. It wasn't immediately known whether Lanier has an attorney.

SD museum unveils new exhibit that includes 8 mongooses

SIoux FALLS, S.D. (AP) — The Delbridge Museum of Natural History in southeast South Dakota has nine new residents.

The Sioux Falls facility has unveiled a new mixed species exhibit that includes eight dwarf mongooses and one Von der Decken's hornbill. The museum says the two species work together to hunt for prey in their native Kenya.

Elizabeth Whealy is president and CEO of the Great Plains Zoo and Delbridge Museum of Natural History. She says children and adults will enjoy watching these animals in a "colorful and highly-visible exhibit."

The new exhibit is located in the museum's lobby. Viewing the exhibit is free with zoo admission.

Construction to close southbound I-190 ramp in Rapid City

RAPID CITY, S.D. (AP) — The South Dakota Department of Transportation says the southbound I-190 off-ramp at Silver Street in Rapid City will be closed to traffic on Wednesday.

The closures for Exit 1C will remain in place until the \$34 million I-190 Interchange project is completed, which is scheduled for July 2017.

Drivers are asked to pay attention to signs for detour routes and be aware of construction workers and equipment adjacent to the driving lanes.

Access to Silver Street and the surrounding neighborhood will be maintained via Anamosa Street or by West Omaha Street to 12th Street to Philadelphia Street by way of Founders Park Drive.

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A temporary gravel access road will be maintained during construction to accommodate access between Philadelphia Street and Silver Street.

South Dakota defeats Eastern Washington 77-71

SACRAMENTO, Calif. (AP) — Shy McClelland scored 18 points and South Dakota made its last seven shots to defeat Eastern Washington 77-71 on Sunday.

Dan Jech added 14 points and Eric Robertson 12 for the Coyotes (4-3), who took the lead for good on a 3-pointer by Casey Kasperbauer that made it 70-67 with 2:55 to play.

Venky Jois made two free throws to pull the Eagles (3-3) within 72-71 at the 1:38 mark, but McClelland answered with a layup and the Coyotes closed it by making 3 of 4 free throws while Eastern missed its last four shots.

South Dakota shot 71 percent in the second half (17 of 24) and finished at 58 percent for the game.

Bogdan Bliznyuk led Eastern Washington with 16 points and Cody Benzel made 4 of 7 behind the arc for 12. The Eagles were 9 of 17 on 3s in the first half but finished just 12 of 31.

Parts of Minnesota, South Dakota, Iowa in for heavy snow

CHANHASSEN, Minn. (AP) — The National Weather Service has issued winter storm warnings and watches for a large part of southern Minnesota, eastern South Dakota and western Iowa ahead of a strengthening storm system.

The snow is expected to start falling early Monday in southwestern Minnesota and nearby parts of South Dakota and Iowa, then spread north and east through Tuesday. Total snowfalls in excess of 6 inches are expected for much of central and southern Minnesota, with local amounts of 10 inches possible during the long-duration storm. The heaviest snow will be in southwestern Minnesota.

The weather service says it'll be a "significant weather event" and that travel conditions will be difficult, including during the Monday evening commute.

Patrol IDs Mitchell man killed in rollover near Artesian

ARTESIAN, S.D. (AP) — The South Dakota Highway Patrol has identified a man who was killed in a one-vehicle rollover crash near Artesian.

The Patrol says the crash happened Friday night, about five miles west of the town.

In an update Sunday, the Patrol said 62-year-old Michael McCreight, of Mitchell, was driving eastbound Highway 34 and was preparing to turn south on Highway 37 when he lost control of his SUV, which rolled and hit an electrical pole.

McCreight died at the scene. He was the only person in the vehicle and was wearing a seatbelt.

The Patrol says the crash remains under investigation.

35-student elementary school in Roberts County to close

35-student elementary school in Roberts County to close at the end of this school year

NEW EFFINGTON, S.D. (AP) — An elementary school in the northeast South Dakota community of New Effington will close at the end of this school year.

Sisseton School Board member William Rice tells KWAT-AM the move to close New Effington Elementary School was a business decision forced by a lack of funding. The school has 35 students.

Rice says parents of New Effington students will be able to choose the school that they want to send their children to next fall.

Leaders of warming Earth meet in Paris to cut emissions

SETH BORENSTEIN, Associated Press

ANGELA CHARLTON, Associated Press

LE BOURGET, France (AP) — Addressing the twin threats of global warming and extremist violence, the largest group of world leaders ever to stand together kicked off two weeks of high-stakes climate talks outside Paris on Monday, saying that by striking an ambitious deal to cut emissions they can show terrorists what countries can achieve when they are united.

The gathering of 151 heads of state and government comes at a somber time for France, two weeks after militants linked to the Islamic State group killed 130 people around Paris. Fears of more attacks have prompted extra-high security and a crackdown on environmental protests — and threaten to eclipse longer-term concerns about rising seas and increasingly extreme weather linked to man-made global warming.

"The challenge of an international meeting has never been so great because it's the future of the planet, the future of life," French President Francois Hollande said after a moment of silence for attack victims in France, Lebanon, Iraq, Tunisia and Mali.

"There are two big global challenges that we must face," he added, urging leaders to create a world free from both environmental destruction and extremist violence.

Many of the leaders paid their respects at sites linked to the attacks on their way to the conference. President Barack Obama, in a late-night visit, placed a single flower outside the concert hall where dozens were killed, and bowed his head in silence.

"We stand with Paris," said U.N. climate change agency chief Christina Figueres said at talks near Le Bourget airfield, just north of the city. "The city of light, now more than ever, is a beacon of hope for the world."

On Sunday, hundreds of thousands of people rallied around the world, calling on the leaders to make real progress at the talks. Violence erupted after one peaceful demonstration in Paris, and hundreds of people were arrested. U.N. Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon took note of the protests in his opening remarks.

"The future of the people of the world, the future of our planet, is in your hands," Ban told negotiators. "We cannot afford indecision, half measures or merely gradual approaches. Our goal must be a transformation."

Ban, Hollande and other leaders called for a binding agreement and emphasized the role of private industry and money in solving what Hollande called "the climate crisis." They said the world must keep future warming to no more than another degree Celsius (1.8 degrees Fahrenheit) from now, and if possible half that to spare island nations threatened by rising seas.

The world has already warmed nearly 1 degree Celsius since the beginning of the industrial age, and 181 nations have made pledges to combat man-made carbon dioxide pollution. The negotiators are tasked with building a global treaty by the end of next week.

"We just have 11 short days before us," French Foreign Minister Laurent Fabius said as he took over as president of the negotiations. "Success is not yet assured, but it is within our grasp... The eyes of the world are upon us and there are great hopes."

Added the outgoing president, Peruvian Environment Minister Manuel Pulgar-Vidal: "We can show to the world that we can work together against climate change and against global terrorism."

Wide Paris-area highways usually packed with commuters were cordoned off to clear the way for all the VIPs. Riot police vans and plainclothes officers were stationed around the capital and by the national stadium, one of the targets of the Nov. 13 attacks that is near the climate conference venue.

The conference is aimed at the most far-reaching deal ever to tackle global warming. The last major agreement, the 1997 Kyoto Protocol, required only rich countries to cut emissions, and the U.S. never signed on.

Among several sticking points is money — how much rich countries should invest to help poor countries cope with climate change, how much should be invested in renewable energy, and how much traditional oil and gas producers stand to lose if countries agree to forever reduce emissions.

With that in mind, at least 19 governments and 28 leading world investors were announcing billions of

dollars in investments to research and develop clean energy technology, with the goal of making it cheaper. Backers include Obama, Microsoft co-founder Bill Gates, Facebook founder Mark Zuckerberg, billionaires George Soros and Saudi Prince Alaweed bin Talal, and Jack Ma of China's Alibaba.

Under the initiative, 19 countries pledge to double their spending on low- or no-carbon energy over the next five years. They currently spend about \$10 billion a year, about half of that from the U.S., Brian Deese, senior adviser to Obama on climate and energy issues, told reporters in Washington.

Gates, the "intellectual architect" of the effort, committed \$1 billion of his own money, U.S. Energy Secretary Ernest Moniz said.

"We'll work to mobilize support to help the most vulnerable countries expand clean energy and adapt to the effects of climate change we can no longer avoid," Obama wrote on his Facebook page.

In a separate announcement, the United States, Canada and nine European countries pledged nearly \$250 million to help the most vulnerable countries adapt to rising seas, droughts and other impacts of climate change. Germany pledged \$53 million, the U.S. \$51 million and Britain \$45 million.

The money will be made available to a fund for the least developed countries hosted by the Global Environment Facility, a major funder of environment projects worldwide. Other countries that contributed include Denmark, Finland, France, Ireland, Italy, Sweden and Switzerland.

Israel convicts 2 youths in 2014 killing of Palestinian teen

DANIELLA CHESLOW, Associated Press

JERUSALEM (AP) — A Jerusalem court on Monday convicted two Israeli youths in the grisly killing last year of 16-year-old Palestinian Mohammed Abu Khdeir, while delaying the verdict for the third and chief suspect in the case due to a last-minute insanity plea.

The killing of Abu Khdeir, who was burned to death, was in revenge for the killing of three Israeli teens in the West Bank — slayings that set off a chain of events that led to the 50-day Gaza war in the summer of 2014.

Monday's verdict could further increase Israeli-Palestinian tensions amid a two-month wave of violence that has been convulsing the region.

In the ruling, Judge Jacob Zaban of Jerusalem's District Court determined that the ringleader, 31-year-old Yosef Haim Ben David, and two Israeli minors — whose names were not released — snatched Abu Khdeir off an east Jerusalem sidewalk in July 2014 and burned him alive in a forest west of the city.

The judge determined that Ben David drove the car while his two accomplices beat Abu Khdeir unconscious in the back seat. Once they reached the forest, one accomplice helped Ben David douse Abu Khdeir with gasoline. Then Ben David lit the match, according to Zaban.

The Palestinian youth's death triggered violent protests and was a milestone in an escalation of violence that led to the Israel-Hamas war. The three suspects were arrested shortly after the July 2, 2014 abduction and confessed to the killing to investigators with Israel's Shin Bet, the security agency said. According to the agency, they said that Abu Khdeir's slaying was in revenge for the abduction and horrific killing of three Israeli teens — Eyal Yifrah, Gilad Shaar and Naftali Fraenkel — by Hamas operatives in the West Bank.

The killing of the three triggered an Israeli crackdown on Hamas in the territory, to which the militant group responded by stepping up rocket fire on Israel from the Gaza Strip, which it controls. The confrontation evolved into the 50-day-war that killed more than 2,200 Palestinians, the majority of them civilians, according to U.N. figures. On the Israeli side, 73 people were killed, most of them soldiers.

Last Thursday, Ben David's attorney Asher Ohayon submitted the insanity plea. Zaban said it would be examined separately, "despite regular and appropriate protocol" later in December.

Prosecutor Uri Corb said Monday that the Abu Khdeir case was a stain on Israeli society. "When we try to claim we are better than our enemies ... we will always have this incident as a mirror," Corb said.

Abu Khdeir's father Hussein denounced the verdict. "This is a lie," he told Israeli Army Radio. "I am afraid that the court will release them (suspects) in the end."

Hamas condemned on Monday what it called "the exoneration" of Ben David, describing him as the

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Jewish settler who killed Abu Khdeir. "This is an evidence of the occupation's racism and its sponsorship of the settlers' crimes against the Palestinian people," Hamas said in a statement.

The two convicted minors will be sentenced in mid-January. One of them had claimed during the trial that he did not realize the three of them would kill Abu Khdeir while the other said he took part in strangling the Palestinian youth inside the car and pouring gasoline on his motionless body. Ben David did not testify.

Israeli law prohibits publishing names of minors on trial. The two minors were 16 years old at the time of the crime, according to attorney Avi Himi, who is representing one of the youths.

The maximum sentence for minors is life imprisonment, according to attorney Lea Tsemel, who often represents Palestinians in court. Israel has mandatory life sentence for adults convicted of murder.

In a case related to Abu Khdeir's death, a Jerusalem court earlier this month sentenced a police officer to six weeks of community service for beating the Palestinian youth's cousin, 15-year-old Tariq Abu Khdeir, of Tampa, Florida, during a July 2014 protest over Mohammed's killing.

That ruling has been criticized as too lenient.

Monday's convictions come amid a two-month wave of unrelenting bloodshed between Israelis and Palestinians that has left 19 Israelis and at least 98 Palestinians dead, including 63 said by Israel to be attackers. On Sunday, Israeli police killed a 17-year-old Palestinian in east Jerusalem who Israel says was throwing a firebomb at Israeli forces.

Israel says the violence stems from Palestinian incitement and incendiary videos that encourage bloodshed on social media. Most of the attackers have been young Palestinians in their teens and early 20s. The Palestinians say the violence is rooted in frustration over a lack of hope for obtaining independence.

10 Things to Know for Today

The Associated Press

Your daily look at late-breaking news, upcoming events and the stories that will be talked about today:

1. WHAT WORLD LEADERS ARE HOPING CLIMATE TALKS SIGNIFY

By striking a deal to cut emissions that are warming the planet they hope they can show terrorists what countries can do when they stand together.

2. POPE MEETS WITH MUSLIMS IN CENTRAL AFRICAN REPUBLIC

Francis brings his message of reconciliation to Bangui's mosque, insisting that Christians and Muslims have long lived peacefully together here and that religion can never justify violence.

3. WHERE CLINIC SHOOTING SUSPECT IS EXPECTED

Robert Lewis Dear, accused of opening fire at a Planned Parenthood clinic in Colorado Springs, is making his first appearance in court.

4. CALENDARS SHOW CLINTON'S AVAILABILITY TO SUPPORTERS

As secretary of state, Hillary Rodham Clinton hosted dozens of influential Democratic Party fundraisers, former Clinton administration and campaign loyalists, and corporate donors to her family's global charity.

5. WHO'S BACK IN SESSION

Lawmakers are returning to Capitol Hill to wrap up work on the budget, highway funding and taxes.

6. HOW PEOPLE CAN SAFELY TAKE CONTROL FROM A SELF-DRIVING CAR

One surprising way to keep drivers alert may be providing distractions that are now illegal, a new study finds.

7. 'DR. DEATH' EXHIBIT OPENS AS PHYSICIAN-ASSISTED DEATHS RISE

A new archive of Dr. Jack Kevorkian, who sparked a national right-to-die debate while performing physician-assisted suicides, opens to the public at the University of Michigan.

8. FOR SOME PEOPLE, THE OLDER THE DEVICE, THE BETTER

Despite tempting upgrade offers and constant software updates that slow everything down, about 10 percent of smartphone users stick with models 3 years old or more.

9. LORDS A-LEAPING! HOLIDAYS ARE EXPENSIVE

Annual tongue-in-cheek report on the rising cost of items in "12 Days of Christmas" reveals that mer-

chandise costs \$34,000, a 0.6 percent increase over last year.

10. PATRIOTS SEE PERFECT SEASON END

C.J. Anderson scores on a 48-yard run with 12:32 left in overtime, powering the Denver Broncos past New England 30-24 on a snowy night and handing the Patriots their first loss (10-1).

GOP's strong words on Muslims incur little political cost

RACHEL ZOLL, Associated Press

ADAM GELLER, Associated Press

Some leading Republican presidential candidates seem to view Muslims as fair game for increasingly harsh words they might use with more caution against any other group for fear of the political cost. So far, that strategy is winning support from conservatives influential in picking the nominee.

Many Republicans are heartened by strong rhetoric addressing what they view as a threat to national security by Islam itself, analysts say. Because Muslims are a small voting bloc, the candidates see limited fallout from what they are saying in the campaign.

"I think this issue exists on its own island," said Steve Schmidt, a Republican political consultant who ran Sen. John McCain's 2008 presidential campaign. "It's highly unlikely to cause a political penalty, and there is no evidence that it has."

Since the attacks that killed 130 people in Paris, GOP front-runner Donald Trump has said he wants to register all Muslims in the U.S. and surveil American mosques. He has repeated unsubstantiated claims that Muslim-Americans in New Jersey celebrated by the "thousands" when the World Trade Center was destroyed on Sept. 11, 2001.

"Donald Trump is already very well-known for being brash and outspoken and is appealing to a group of people — a minority of American voters, but a large minority — who seem to like that kind of tough talk," said John Green, director of the Bliss Institute of Applied Politics at the University of Akron.

Rival Ben Carson said allowing Syrian refugees into the U.S. would be akin to exposing a neighborhood to a "rabid dog." Former Arkansas Gov. Mike Huckabee said, "I'd like for Barack Obama to resign if he's not going to protect America and instead protect the image of Islam."

Such statements appeal to Republicans who think Obama and Democratic front-runner Hillary Rodham Clinton, the former secretary of state, have not done enough to fight jihadis, Green said. The sentiment also plays well for evangelicals concerned about violence directed at Christians in the Middle East and angered about restrictions their missionaries face in predominantly Muslim countries.

"There's a religious undercurrent here, aside from foreign policy issues," Green said.

Other inflammatory rhetoric from the Trump and Carson campaigns has generated far different reactions.

When Trump announced his campaign, he said Mexican immigrants are "bringing crime. They're rapists." He was widely denounced. Polls find Latinos strongly disapprove of his candidacy and his remarks alienated other immigrant groups.

The potency of comments criticizing Muslims was apparent even before recent attacks by extremists in France, Lebanon and Egypt.

Carson's campaign reported strong fundraising and more than 100,000 new Facebook friends in the 24 hours after he told NBC's "Meet the Press" in September, "I would not advocate that we put a Muslim in charge of this nation."

Campaign manager Barry Bennett told The Associated Press, "While the left wing is huffing and puffing over it, Republican primary voters are with us at least 80-20."

"People in Iowa particularly, are like, 'Yeah! We're not going to vote for a Muslim either,'" Bennett said at the time. "I don't mind the hubbub. It's not hurting us, that's for sure."

According to a 2014 poll by the Pew Research Center, Republicans view Muslims more negatively than they do any other religious group, and significantly worse than do Democrats. A different Pew poll last year found that 82 percent of Republicans were "very concerned" about the rise of Islamic extremism, compared with 51 percent of Democrats and 60 percent of independents.

Today, 84 percent of Republicans disapprove of taking in Syrian refugees, most of whom are Muslims,

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compared with 40 percent of Democrats and 58 percent of independents, according to a Gallup poll released just before Thanksgiving.

In recent years, Americans' attitudes toward Islam and Muslims have been relatively stable following terrorist attacks. But opposition jumped in the run-up to the U.S. invasion of Iraq and around major elections. To Dalia Mogahed, research director for the Institute for Social Policy and Understanding and former executive director of the Gallup Center for Muslim Studies, those are signs that "the public was being manipulated" by politicians with agendas.

After the Sept. 11 attacks, when President George W. Bush visited a Washington mosque and said "Islam is peace," public opinion of the faith actually improved, she said. But the absence of such a leader has created a clear path for candidates who oppose Islam.

"They've now latched onto Muslims as an easy target with no consequences," Mogahed said. "We've really moved the threshold of what is socially acceptable."

Singling out Muslims is not new.

Before the 2012 presidential election, Republican candidate Newt Gingrich called for a federal ban on Islamic law and said Muslims could hold public office in the U.S. if "the person would commit in public to give up Shariah." Huckabee, then considering a presidential run, called Islam "the antithesis of the gospel of Christ."

But candidates at the top of the field stayed away from such rhetoric.

"The kind of things that Donald Trump and Ben Carson are saying today are things that Mitt Romney would have never said," said Farid Senzai, a political scientist at Santa Clara University. Romney was the Republican nominee in 2012.

Criticism of Muslims is hardly limited to presidential campaigns. In recent years, there have been ads by anti-Muslim groups and well-organized campaigns against the building of mosques, along with pressure on state legislatures to ban Shariah law.

"All of these things — built up over more than a decade by a few very vocal people — have created a climate in which it is not just acceptable for politicians to play to our basest instincts, but perhaps politically expedient," Jonathan Greenblatt, chief executive of the Anti-Defamation League, said in an email.

The intensity of the rhetoric is partly a symptom of the large field of GOP candidates, all trying to stake out ground to prove themselves as the most patriotic and toughest on national security, said Charles Dunn, former dean of the school of government at Regent University, which was founded by Pat Robertson, an evangelist and one-time GOP presidential candidate.

"The tone is much more strident now, much less forgiving," Dunn said.

American Muslims make up just under 1 percent of the U.S. population, Pew estimates. They come from many different backgrounds and are widely dispersed, limiting their political influence, Green said.

The Muslim Public Affairs Council, a policy and advocacy group based in Los Angeles, sent letters in October to all the presidential candidates asking them to attend the organization's public policy forum. The candidates either did not respond or declined, council spokeswoman Rabiah Ahmed said.

"Over the last 10 years, the political and civic organizations for U.S. Muslims have become much better organized, but I think their voice is still fairly muted," Green said.

Even so, some observers say the verbal attacks risk alienating larger segments of voters, particularly other immigrants worried they could be next.

Suhail Khan, who worked in a number of posts in George W. Bush's administration and has decried criticism by Republican politicians of fellow Muslims, said: "There's no doubt that when specific candidates, in this case Dr. Carson and Mr. Trump, think that they can narrowly attack one specific group, other Americans of various faiths and backgrounds are paying attention."

Global stocks down ahead of US data, Fed speeches

JOE McDONALD, AP Business Writer

BEIJING (AP) — Global stock markets were mostly lower Monday as investors looked ahead to this week's public appearances by the U.S. Federal Reserve chief for signs of whether the central bank will raise interest rates this month.

KEEPING SCORE: In early trading, France's CAC-40 retreated 0.3 percent to 4,913.61 and Germany's DAX was off 0.2 percent at 11,293.76. Britain's FTSE 100 fell 0.7 percent to 6,331.32. Wall Street was set to add to Friday's losses. Futures for the Standard & Poor's 500 shed 0.3 percent to 17,743.00. Dow futures lost 0.3 percent to 17,742.00.

FED SPEECH: Fed Chairwoman Janet Yellen is due to deliver a speech Wednesday and congressional testimony Thursday in which financial analysts expect her to affirm the view that the U.S. economy is improving enough that the Fed can raise interest rates. Rates at near zero since the 2008 global crisis have helped boost stock prices. Fed officials have indicated they are likely to approve a rate hike at their Dec. 15-16 meeting. Yellen has said further increases will be gradual. Investors are looking ahead to a flurry of U.S. data this week: housing sales on Monday, manufacturing on Tuesday, jobs on Wednesday and Thursday and trade on Friday.

ANALYST'S TAKE: "At this point the presumption is that tightening is about to begin, even if this week's slew of important data are weaker than expected," said Jim O'Sullivan of High Frequency Economics in a report. "Indeed, Fed Chair Yellen is not even waiting for this week's employment report before giving what we expect will be the clearest signal to date that the start of tightening is imminent," said O'Sullivan. "We expect she will emphasize cumulative improvement in the labor market, downplaying the importance of a single monthly reading."

ASIA'S DAY: Seoul's Kospi fell 1.8 percent to 1,991.97 after South Korea's industrial production in October dropped unexpectedly from the previous month, led by weakness in chemicals, auto production and construction. Tokyo's Nikkei 225 retreated 0.7 percent to 19,747.47. The Shanghai Composite Index advanced 0.3 percent to 3,445.40, recovering a portion of Friday's 5.5 percent plunge. Sydney's S&P/ASX 200 lost 0.7 percent to 5,166.50 and Hong Kong's Hang Seng shed 0.3 percent to 21,996.42. India's Sensex was little changed. Singapore and Bangkok advanced while Jakarta and Wellington declined.

ENERGY: Benchmark U.S. crude declined 10 cents to \$41.61 per barrel in electronic trading on the New York Mercantile Exchange. The contract plunged \$1.33 on Friday to close at \$41.71. Brent crude, used to price international oils, lost 25 cents to \$44.61 per barrel in London. It fell 60 cents on Friday to \$44.86.

CURRENCIES: The dollar gained to 122.93 yen from Friday's 122.76. The euro edged down to \$1.0586 from \$1.0593.

Congress returns to looming deadlines on budget, highways

ANDREW TAYLOR, Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — Lawmakers are returning to Capitol Hill to wrap up work on the budget, highway funding and taxes, an end-of-the-year stretch that will test the standing of Republican leaders like House Speaker Paul Ryan with the GOP's tea party wing and its anti-establishment presidential candidates.

There are less than two weeks until a deadline to pass a \$1.1 trillion catchall spending bill to fund Cabinet agencies and avoid a holiday season government shutdown. If the process doesn't go smoothly, a last-minute temporary funding measure would be required to keep the government open when the current stopgap funding measure expires Dec. 11.

The so-called omnibus spending bill represents a challenge for Ryan, R-Wis., who took over the top House job after former Speaker John Boehner, R-Ohio, was forced out this fall over his penchant for looking to Democrats to pass major legislation like year-end spending bills, among other reasons.

Ryan is sure to have to do the same this time around despite pressure from outside groups like the Heritage Foundation to force battles over trying to use the must-do measure to take away federal funding from Planned Parenthood or deal with worries about Syrian refugees in the wake of the Paris attacks.

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But the renegades that ran Boehner out of Washington aren't in any mood to rough up Ryan just yet.

"I think it's unfair to hold Paul Ryan accountable for this particular omnibus. The Dec. 11 crisis that our leadership created is one of the reasons we got rid of our leadership," said Rep. Thomas Massie, R-Ky., a tea party favorite. "It's not of his making, and I personally would not write him off if something doesn't happen on this omnibus, whether it's Planned Parenthood ... or something else."

Sen. Ted Cruz, R-Texas, who is rising in the national presidential horserace polls, is another matter altogether. If past is prologue, he's sure to use debate on the omnibus measure to burnish his reputation for attacking Capitol Hill GOP leaders and build opposition to the catchall spending compromise among Republican voters.

House-Senate negotiations on a long-term measure funding highway and transit programs seem likely to finally produce results, helped in large part by a new "offset" to help pay for the measure that involves a money shuffle from the Federal Reserve to the Treasury. At issue is a House provision to eliminate \$29.3 billion in the Federal Reserve's capital surplus account and prevent the Fed from depositing future profits there.

Budget watchdogs call the money transfer a complete gimmick and say that the additional highway spending it is being used to justify will increase the federal debt by at least \$59 billion over the coming 10 years. But free money is a precious commodity in Washington and given the popularity of highway spending — as well as the sweeping 354-72 House vote for the move — the common wisdom is that the dubious offset will stay.

Another item on the must-do list involves extending already expired tax breaks in time for the upcoming filing season.

Businesses big and small would continue to claim dozens of tax breaks that expired at the start of the year under a bill that overwhelmingly passed the Senate Finance Committee.

Struggling homeowners and people who live in states without a state income tax would get to keep their tax breaks, too. The \$95 billion package would extend more than 50 tax credits, exemptions and deductions through 2016. Support for these so-called tax extenders is bipartisan.

Among the biggest breaks for businesses are a tax credit for research and development; an exemption that allows financial companies such as banks and investment firms to shield foreign profits from being taxed by the U.S.; and several provisions that allow businesses to write off capital investments more quickly.

There is also a generous tax credit for using wind farms and other renewable energy sources to produce electricity.

More narrow provisions include tax breaks for filmmakers, theatrical productions, racehorse owners and NASCAR track owners. The biggest tax break for individuals allows people who live in states without an income tax to deduct state and local sales taxes on their federal returns.

Before turning to the must-do business, GOP leaders are devoting the House and Senate floors to taking on President Barack Obama's health care law and his climate change agenda.

The Senate is turning to a rare opportunity to employ fast-track procedures to pass a bill to repeal much of the Affordable Care Act and "defund" Planned Parenthood. The fast-track legislative process would remove the threat of a filibuster by Democrats. The measure would have to be reconciled with a House-passed version before it can be shipped to Obama, however.

Meanwhile, with Obama in Paris for a U.N. conference on global warming, House GOP leaders have slated votes to disapprove two recent administration regulations on greenhouse gas emissions from power plants. The move would send the measures to Obama's desk, and he is sure to veto them.

How can people safely take control from a self-driving car?

JUSTIN PRITCHARD, Associated Press

LOS ANGELES (AP) — New cars that can steer and brake themselves risk lulling people in the driver's seat into a false sense of security — and even to sleep. One way to keep people alert may be providing distractions that are now illegal.

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That was one surprising finding when researchers put Stanford University students in a simulated self-driving car to study how they reacted when their robo-chauffer needed help.

The experiment was one in a growing number that assesses how cars can safely hand control back to a person when their self-driving software and sensors are overwhelmed or overmatched. With some models already able to stay in their lane or keep a safe distance from other traffic, and automakers pushing for more automation, the car-to-driver handoff is a big open question.

The elimination of distracted driving is a major selling point for the technology. But in the Stanford experiment, reading or watching a movie helped keep participants awake.

Among the 48 students, 13 who were instructed to monitor the car and road from the driver's seat began to nod off. Only three did so when told to focus on a screen full of words or moving images.

Alertness was particularly helpful when students needed to grab the wheel because a car or pedestrian got in the way.

There's no consensus on the right car-to-driver handoff approach: the Stanford research suggests engaging people with media could help, while some automakers are marketing vehicles with limited self-driving features that will slow down if they detect a person has stopped paying attention to the road.

Self-driving car experts at Google, which is pursuing the technology more aggressively than any automaker, concluded that involving humans would make its cars less safe. Google's solution is a prototype with no steering wheel or pedals — human control would be limited to go and stop buttons.

Meanwhile, traditional automakers are phasing in the technology. Mercedes and Toyota sell cars that can hit the brakes and stay in their lane. By adding new features each year, they might produce a truly self-driving car in about a decade.

One potential hazard of this gradualist approach became clear this fall, when Tesla Motors had to explain that its "auto pilot" feature did not mean drivers could stop paying attention. Several videos posted online showed people recording the novelty — then seizing the wheel when the car made a startling move.

A Super Cruise system, which will allow semi-autonomous highway driving in the Cadillac CTS starting late next year, monitors drivers. If their eyes are off the road, and they don't respond to repeated prodding, the car will slow itself.

"We are in no way selling this as a technology where the driver can check out," General Motors spokesman Dan Flores said. "You can relax, glance away, but you still have to be aware because you know the technology's not foolproof."

Though research is ongoing, it appears that people need at least 5 seconds to take over — if they're not totally checked out.

One riddle automakers must solve: How to get owners to trust the technology so that they'll use it — but not trust it so much that they'll be lulled into a false security that makes them slow to react when the car needs them.

Trust was on the mind of researchers who in August published an extensive report on self-driving cars funded by the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration. "Although this trust is essential for widespread adoption, participants were also observed prioritizing non-driving activities over the operation of the vehicle," the authors wrote.

Another wide-open question: How to alert the person in the driver's seat of the need to begin driving.

It appears that the car should appeal to several senses. Visual warnings alone may not suffice. Combine a light with spoken instructions or physical stimulation such as a vibrating seat, and people are quicker to reassume control.

"If it is done courteously and subtle and not annoying, it could be missed by someone that is distracted," said Greg Fitch, a research scientist at the Virginia Tech Transportation Institute. Then again, the way the car interacts with people will be one way automakers differentiate their product — and overbearing warnings may sour potential buyers.

Other issues Fitch cites include "mode confusion" (making sure the car clearly informs the person whether or not it is driving itself) and clear explanations to drivers of what the car can — and cannot — handle.

Cars with the right sensors are becoming really good at monitoring the outside world and have quicker

response times than humans. People are much better at making decisions under uncertain circumstances.

One lesson from the Stanford study may be that master and machine are better viewed as collaborators.

"There's really a relationship between drivers and cars," said David Sirkin, who helped run the experiment at Stanford's Center for Design Research, "and that relationship is becoming more a peer relationship."

Calendars show Clinton's availability to supporters

STEPHEN BRAUN, Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — As secretary of state, Hillary Rodham Clinton opened her office to dozens of influential Democratic party fundraisers, former Clinton administration and campaign loyalists, and corporate donors to her family's global charity, according to State Department calendars obtained by The Associated Press.

The woman who would become a 2016 presidential candidate met or spoke by phone with nearly 100 corporate executives, Clinton charity donors and political supporters during her four years at the State Department between 2009 and 2013, records show. Many of those meetings and calls, formally scheduled by her aides, involved heads of companies and organizations that were pursuing business or private interests with the Obama administration at the time, including with the State Department while Clinton was in charge.

In addition, at least 60 of those who met with Clinton have donated or pledged program commitments to the Bill, Hillary and Chelsea Clinton Foundation. A dozen have been among Hillary Clinton's most reliable political fundraisers, bundling more than \$100,000 in donations during her failed 2008 presidential campaign or providing larger amounts to Clinton-allied super political action committees this time. And at least six entities represented in the meetings paid former President Bill Clinton lucrative fees for speeches.

The AP found no evidence of legal or ethical conflicts in Clinton's meetings, in its examination of 1,294 pages from the calendars. Her sit-downs with business leaders were not unique among recent secretaries of state, who sometimes called on corporate executives to aid in international affairs, according to archived documents.

But the difference with Clinton's meetings was that she was a 2008 presidential contender who was widely expected to try again in 2016. Her availability to luminaries from politics, business and charity shows the extent to which her office became a sounding board for their interests. And her ties with so many familiar faces from those intersecting worlds were complicated by their lucrative financial largess and political support over the years — even during her State Department tenure — for her campaigns and her husband's, and for her family's foundation.

Among those she met with or spoke with by phone were chief executives such as General Electric Co.'s Jeff Immelt, PepsiCo Inc.'s Indra Nooyi, FedEx Corp.'s Fred Smith, former Morgan Stanley chairman John Mack and former Citigroup Inc. chairman Sanford Weill. There were also billionaires: investors George Soros and Warren Buffett and diet pioneer S. Daniel Abraham. Major Democratic Party fundraisers included entertainment magnate Haim Saban, real estate developer Stephen J. Cloobek and American Federation of Teachers president Randi Weingarten.

In its response to detailed questions from the AP, the Clinton campaign did not address the issue of the candidate's frequent meetings with corporate and political supporters during her State Department tenure. Instead, campaign spokesman Nick Merrill said "Secretary Clinton turned over all of her work emails, 55,000 pages of them, and asked that they be released to the public. Some of that will include her schedules. We look forward to the rest of her emails being released so people can have a greater window into her work at the department."

The State Department turned the Clinton calendars over to the AP earlier this month, documents the AP sought for two years under the Freedom of Information Act. The department censored many meeting entries for privacy reasons or to protect internal deliberations, making it impossible to discern all the identities of those who met Clinton. A State Department spokesman declined to comment on the agency's redactions of the calendars or the arrangements for Secretary of State John Kerry's daily schedules.

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The AP has also sought detailed planning schedules that aides sent Clinton before each day's events, but the State Department has declined to search through the files of some of Clinton's close aides at the time. The State Department's release of Clinton emails has so far turned up at least 155 planning schedules, called "minischedules," but they account for only a tiny percentage of Clinton's four-year stint — 7 percent of the 1,159 days covered by those email releases.

Merrill said Clinton was not sent the planning "minischedules" every day or when she traveled, "which would account for why you see some on some days and not on others."

The AP also found at least a dozen differences between Clinton's planners and calendars involving visits by donors and longtime loyalists. In one example, a June 2010 Clinton planning schedule that the State Department released uncensored shows a 3 p.m. meeting between Clinton and her longtime private lawyer, David Kendall. But Clinton's formal calendar lists the 20-minute session only as "private meeting — secretary's office," omitting Kendall's name.

The Clinton campaign could not explain those discrepancies but said the candidate had made a good faith effort to be transparent by giving her work-related emails to the State Department for public release.

The calendars offer hour-by-hour depictions of Clinton's hectic diplomatic schedule in Washington and her foreign tours crammed with meetings with dignitaries. Even so, she found time to meet CEOs, loyalists and donors.

"It shows Hillary Clinton marrying her political interests with the business and policy interests of powerful people," said Lawrence Jacobs, director of the Center for the Study of Politics and Governance at the University of Minnesota. "These are the people you cultivate to lay the groundwork for running for president."

Clinton favored a select group of visitors — at least two dozen — for repeated meetings. Abraham, the billionaire behind SlimFast diet products and chairman of the S. Daniel Abraham Center for Middle East Peace, met with Clinton at least three times and was slated to meet her three other times, according to her calendars and schedules. Clinton's calendars showed they met at her office in May 2009 and October 2010. Clinton also spoke at an Abraham Center event in April 2010.

Abraham has given \$5 million to \$10 million to the Clinton Foundation and donated \$1.2 million in 2012 to Priorities USA Action, a super PAC supporting Clinton in 2016. Abraham told the AP that he assumed that he and Clinton discussed Mideast policy during their contacts.

Teachers' union chief Weingarten met Clinton three times, in 2009, 2010 and 2012. Emails released by the State Department show that Weingarten's policy aide, Tina Flournoy, messaged Clinton at her private account in mid-September 2009 saying that "Randi and would like to visit you re: child labor issues — if that's possible, whom should I contact to schedule?"

Clinton responded: "I would love to see you and Randi. I'm copying Lona (Clinton's scheduling aide) to see how soon we can schedule. Hope you're well."

Less than three weeks later, Weingarten and Flournoy — now chief of staff to Bill Clinton — met Hillary Clinton for a half hour, according to the calendars. That year, the union spent nearly \$1 million lobbying the government on issues that included child labor in Uzbekistan. The union also spent at least \$1 million in both 2010 and 2012, the other years Weingarten met with Clinton.

"We discussed a range of issues with Secretary Clinton — including the growing refugee crisis, expanding access to education globally and curbing child labor practices," said Kate Childs Graham, speaking for the union.

Weingarten's union endorsed Clinton's 2016 presidential bid in July, and Weingarten is on the board of Priorities USA Action. The union has also given \$1 million to \$5 million to the Clinton Foundation and committed, along with two banking partners, to launch a \$100 million loan fund to expand classrooms for young children under the auspices of the charity's Clinton Global Initiative.

PepsiCo CEO Nooyi also had at least three scheduled contacts with Clinton. In February 2010, Nooyi and GE's Immelt met Clinton as part of the State Department's efforts to secure corporate money for an American pavilion in China's Shanghai Expo in May of that year. PepsiCo spent \$6.8 million in 2010 on government lobbying. Nooyi talked twice with Clinton by phone in 2012, a year when PepsiCo spent \$3.3 million on lobbying Congress and federal agencies, including State Department officials, on issues such

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as trade pacts and Russia legislation.

Nooyi is not a prominent Clinton political supporter, but PepsiCo has been active with the Clinton Foundation. PepsiCo's foundation pledged in 2008 to provide \$7.6 million in grants to two water firms as a commitment to the Clinton Global Initiative. The Clinton charity also listed a PepsiCo Foundation donation of more than \$100,000 in 2014, the same year the soda company's foundation announced a partnership under the charity to spur economic and social development in emerging nations.

A top executive with PepsiCo's main rival, Coca-Cola, which donated \$5 million to \$10 million to the Clinton Foundation, also discussed the Shanghai event with Clinton in a 2009 conference call along with executives from Pepsi and several other firms. PepsiCo spokesman Jon Banner declined to discuss conversations or meetings it said its senior leaders may have had.

A dozen other executives and political supporters met or were in phone contact with Clinton at least twice during her State Department tenure — among them Immelt, Saban, Soros and Clinton intimate and now-Virginia Gov. Terry McAuliffe, according to the calendars.

Another was Alfonso Fanjul, one of four brothers who run a Florida-based sugar and real estate conglomerate and are politically active in the state's Cuban-American community.

Fanjul, whose family subsidiaries include Domino Sugar and Florida Crystals, was a Florida co-chairman for Bill Clinton's first presidential campaign in 1992, supported Hillary Clinton's 2008 run and has donated between \$100,000 and \$250,000 to the Clinton Foundation. Florida Crystals spent \$1 million lobbying the Obama administration in 2011 and nearly that amount in 2009, 2010 and 2012 on issues related to sugar and its use as a biofuel.

Fanjul met Hillary Clinton for a half hour in October 2009. Gaston Cantens, a spokesman for the firm, said Fanjul sought the 2009 meeting because he was having "customs issues coming in and out of the country and wanted help." Cantens said Fanjul's entry and exit problems eased.

Clinton met Fanjul again at a 10-minute "pull-aside" during a Brookings Institution luncheon in June 2012. The event honored Saban and his wife, Cheryl, who both bundled donations to Hillary Clinton's 2008 campaign and whose family foundation has donated between \$5 million and \$10 million to the Clinton Foundation.

The calendar doesn't say what they discussed, but the event came two months after Fanjul returned from a trip to Cuba with a Brookings delegation. Fanjul, a Brookings trustee who had been a longtime foe of U.S. trade with Cuba, has publicly reversed course on the issue and is now open to investments there.

Cantens said Fanjul and Clinton discussed topics "related to Brookings," but added: "I'm not saying Cuba didn't come up."

Fantasy sports companies weigh leaving US market _ for now

PHILIP MARCELO, Associated Press

BOSTON (AP) — Yahoo remains active. CBS has quietly withdrawn. And lesser known daily fantasy sports companies are scaling back.

As industry leaders FanDuel and DraftKings fight to protect their lucrative enterprises, other companies offering daily fantasy sports are taking different approaches to how they operate as their new industry faces increased scrutiny.

"The industry is pretty fragmented on the 'should they stay or should they go' issue," says Chris Grove, editor of the Las Vegas-based Legal Sports Report, which focuses on sports wagering. "A real schism has opened up."

Many companies are retrenching, but their movements haven't significantly hurt the market, said David Copeland, CEO of SuperLobby, a U.K. website that tracks daily fantasy sports companies.

The maneuvering has largely depended on each company's size and other interests. Boston's DraftKings and New York's FanDuel — by far the largest operators in terms of player entry fees and prize money — have gone all-in to stay put.

Yahoo, a top site for season-long fantasy sports, is among the companies that have the luxury to pick

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battles until the dust settles.

Like most operators, the California tech giant does not operate daily fantasy sports games in states where local law effectively bans their industry: Arizona, Iowa, Louisiana, Montana, Nevada and Washington.

But it's also withdrawn from Florida, where a federal grand jury is looking at whether daily fantasy sports games violate state law. FanDuel, DraftKings and a number of others still operate there.

At the same time, Yahoo remains in New York, despite being issued a subpoena by state Attorney General Eric Schneiderman for more information about its daily fantasy operations. Schneiderman hasn't ordered the company to stop operating in the state, as he's done with DraftKings and FanDuel, which are fighting the order in court.

Yahoo declined to elaborate on its state-by-state strategy but said in a statement it believes it's offering a "lawful product."

CBS Sports, another big player in the traditional, season-long fantasy sports world that offers competition for cash prizes, appears to be taking a more conservative approach.

The company, which declined to comment for this story, rolled out its daily fantasy games under a revived SportsLine brand about midway through the Major League Baseball season. But the games never continued into the more lucrative NFL season, as expected.

StarsDraft is an extreme example among daily fantasy operators.

The company is owned by Amaya, operators of the popular PokerStars gambling website. It pulled out of most states just weeks after launching for the NFL season, and its contests are now only offered in Massachusetts, Kansas, New Jersey and Maryland.

Eric Hollreiser, Amaya's vice president of communications, says the company is simply taking the long view.

"We aren't ceding anything to competitors," he says. "We're running a marathon and won't compete in the expensive marketing sprint the others are running."

Grove suggests Amaya — one of the world's biggest online gambling companies— has other priorities. Chiefly, bringing regulated online poker to the United States.

"They're playing for different stakes," he said. "There's little reason for them to push the envelope legally in the United States, especially over daily fantasy sports, which would represent a drag on their bottom line at this stage."

For smaller, daily fantasy sports-centered startups, it's a somewhat different calculation.

Mondogoal, a U.K. daily fantasy sports company focused on professional soccer, has pulled out of seven states so far. Founder Shergul Arshad, a Massachusetts resident, says he's considering pulling up stakes entirely from the U.S.

Almost 90 percent of Mondogoal's customers, he says, are outside the U.S. anyway.

Meanwhile, at Star Fantasy Leagues, chief operating officer Seth Young says the New York-based company pulled out of 25 states recently because it concluded the risks were too great after examining local laws. Instead, the 3-year-old company has pivoted to focus on developing daily fantasy sports platforms for other operators, such as state lotteries.

"We'd rather see the clarity and re-enter," he said. "Otherwise, we'll focus our attention elsewhere."

Kobe Bryant says he will retire at end of season

GREG BEACHAM, AP Sports Writer

LOS ANGELES (AP) — After 20 years in a Lakers uniform and a lifetime in basketball, Kobe Bryant determined that his aching body and his passion for the game had both grown weaker than his excitement about the future.

That's when Kobe decided he could only wait a few more months to begin his life after the Lakers.

Bryant announced Sunday that he will retire after this season, ending a landmark 20-year NBA career spent entirely with Los Angeles. He was serenaded with cheers throughout the struggling Lakers' 107-103 loss to Indiana, beginning his farewell tour through the league with a clear mind and a burgeoning curiosity about his next chapter.

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"I had to just accept the fact that I don't want to do this anymore, and I'm OK with that," the dry-eyed, smiling Bryant said after the game.

The 37-year-old Bryant made the long-anticipated declaration in a post on The Players' Tribune on Sunday, writing a poem titled "Dear Basketball."

"My heart can take the pounding. My mind can handle the grind. But my body knows it's time to say goodbye," wrote Bryant, the third-leading scorer in NBA history. "And that's OK. I'm ready to let you go. I want you to know now. So we both can savor every moment we have left together. The good and the bad. We have given each other all that we have."

When the Lakers hosted the Indiana Pacers on Sunday night, fans expecting an unremarkable regular-season game for the struggling home team instead received a letter from Bryant in a black envelope embossed with gold.

"What you've done for me is far greater than anything I've done for you," Bryant wrote. "I knew that each minute of each game I wore purple and gold."

The theatricality of Bryant's announcement fit a dramatic career that has included five championship rings and 17 All-Star selections during two decades with the Lakers, giving him the longest tenure with one team in NBA history.

Bryant went straight from high school in suburban Philadelphia to his favorite childhood team in 1996. He became the top scorer in Lakers history with offensive creativity and resourceful athleticism that inspired the generation of fans and players who missed Michael Jordan's peak, but grew up on the dynamic exploits of the Lakers' latest superstar.

"Kobe was my Jordan," said Southern California native Paul George, who scored 39 points for Indiana to beat the Lakers after Bryant missed a late 3-pointer to tie it. "Watching him win championships when I was growing up, that's who I idolized. That was the standard."

But Bryant's last three seasons have ended early due to injuries, and he played in only 41 games over the previous two years. He has struggled mightily in the first 16 games of this season with mostly young teammates on a rebuilding roster, making a career-worst 32 percent of his shots and dealing with pain and exhaustion every day.

Yet to Bryant, the current state of his game is no tragedy.

"There's so much beauty in the pain of this thing," Bryant said. "It sounds really weird to say that, but I appreciate the really, really tough times as much as I appreciate the great times. It's important to go through that progression, because I think that's where you really learn about the self."

In recent months, Bryant repeatedly said he didn't know whether he would play another season, clearly hoping for a rebound in his health and the Lakers' fortunes.

Neither has happened, and the ever-impatient Bryant didn't wait any longer to decide his future.

"Kobe Bryant is one of the greatest players in the history of our game," NBA Commissioner Adam Silver said. "Whether competing in the Finals or hoisting jump shots after midnight in an empty gym, Kobe has an unconditional love for the game."

In a ritual likely to be repeated in arenas for the next 4 1/2 months, Bryant warmed up for Sunday's game amid even more than the usual swarm of camera phones and flashes surrounding the court. Bryant then missed his first six shots, including three 3-pointers. His slump stretched to 2 for 17 before he hit two big shots late, including a last-minute 3-pointer before his final miss.

Bryant surprised Lakers coach Byron Scott with his decision Saturday night. Scott, Bryant's teammate during the 1996-97 season, thought the star "had at least another year" in him.

Bryant disagreed, and he decided to make it public after talking with Jordan and other "muses."

"If I had a burning desire to continue to play, I would," Bryant said. "I wouldn't be second-guessing. I wouldn't be on the fence. I feel very solid in my decision."

Even during his late-career struggles with the foundering Lakers, Bryant's fans have remained devoted to the 6-foot-6 star who won titles alongside Shaquille O'Neal in 2000, 2001 and 2002 before teaming with Pau Gasol for two more in 2009 and 2010. Only 13 players in league history played on more championship teams than Bryant.

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Even with the Lakers already likely to miss the playoffs for the third straight season — a first in franchise history — Bryant intends to keep going. The Lakers start an eight-game road trip Tuesday in Philadelphia, and he has already been saluted with cheers this season in savvy cities like New York and Miami where fans already realized it was probably his last stop.

“There’s nothing I would love more than to be able to play this entire season, to go through all of these tough times, to be able to suit up and play on the road in these buildings for the last time,” Bryant said.

Bryant is the NBA’s highest-paid player this season with a \$25 million salary bestowed on him by grateful Lakers owner Jim Buss despite his recent injury problems, and he is keeping his vow never to play for another franchise.

But Bryant’s departure will allow the Lakers to split with the past while embracing a future with young prospects Julius Randle, D’Angelo Russell and Jordan Clarkson.

General manager Mitch Kupchak has spent his entire career building rosters around Bryant, but the executive acknowledged frustration with the Lakers’ incredible struggles in Bryant’s final two seasons.

“Clearly we’re not playing at the kind of level that a player of Kobe’s age and experience finds challenging, kind of like there’s no light at the end of the tunnel,” said Kupchak, who didn’t learn of Bryant’s decision until Sunday afternoon. “So I’m not surprised that he would make the announcement now. I think the game will be easier for him now. I think he’ll be able to enjoy the rest of the season.”

Bryant struck a philosophical tone in his first public comments since his decision, referencing the peace of mind created by his decision. He also spoke vaguely about plans for next year, but provided hints such as describing himself as “a storyteller” and explaining his conversations with Giorgio Armani about the fashion designer’s ability to build a global brand after turning 40 years old.

None of Bryant’s plans appear to have much to do with basketball — although he allowed that it would be “an honor” to play for his third Olympic gold medal in Rio de Janeiro next summer if he is picked for the U.S. team.

“I don’t want to get too Zen-like,” Bryant said. “But honestly, when I’m sitting in meditation, my mind starts drifting, and it always drifted toward basketball, always. And it doesn’t do that now. It does that sometimes. It doesn’t do that all the time, and to me, that was really the first indicator that this game is not something I can obsess over for much longer.”

Today in History The Associated Press

Today is Monday, Nov. 30, the 334th day of 2015. There are 31 days left in the year.

Today’s Highlight in History:

On Nov. 30, 1965, “Unsafe at Any Speed” by Ralph Nader, a book highly critical of the U.S. auto industry, was first released in hardcover by Grossman Publishers.

On this date:

In 1782, the United States and Britain signed preliminary peace articles in Paris, ending the Revolutionary War.

In 1803, Spain completed the process of ceding Louisiana to France, which had sold it to the United States.

In 1835, Samuel Langhorne Clemens - better known as Mark Twain - was born in Florida, Missouri.

In 1874, British statesman Sir Winston Churchill was born at Blenheim Palace.

In 1900, Irish writer Oscar Wilde died in Paris at age 46.

In 1936, London’s famed Crystal Palace, constructed for the Great Exhibition of 1851, was destroyed in a fire.

In 1939, the Winter War began as Soviet troops invaded Finland. (The conflict ended the following March with a Soviet victory.)

In 1940, Lucille Ball and Desi Arnaz were married at the Byram River Beagle Club in Greenwich, Connecticut. (The marriage ended in divorce in 1960.)

In 1954, Ann Elizabeth Hodges of Oak Grove, Alabama, was slightly injured when an 8-1/2-pound chunk of meteor crashed through the roof of her house, hit a radio cabinet, then hit her as she lay napping on

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a couch.

In 1966, the former British colony of Barbados became independent.

In 1982, the Michael Jackson album "Thriller" was released by Epic Records. The motion picture "Gandhi," starring Ben Kingsley as the Indian nationalist leader, had its world premiere in New Delhi.

In 1990, the horror-thriller film "Misery," starring James Caan and Kathy Bates, was released by Columbia Pictures.

Ten years ago: President George W. Bush gave an unflinching defense of his Iraq war strategy in a speech at the U.S. Naval Academy in Annapolis, Maryland, refusing to set a timetable for troop withdrawals and asserting that once-shaky Iraqi troops were proving increasingly capable. Shimon Peres quit Israel's Labor Party, his political home of six decades, to campaign for Israeli Prime Minister Ariel Sharon's new organization. Actress Jean Parker died in Woodland Hills, California, at age 90.

Five years ago: Pentagon leaders called for scrapping the 17-year-old "don't ask, don't tell" ban after releasing a survey about the prospect of openly gay troops. The Obama administration announced that all 197 airlines that flew to the U.S. had begun collecting names, genders and birth dates of passengers so the government could check them against terror watch lists before they boarded flights.

One year ago: Pope Francis and the spiritual leader of the world's Orthodox Christians, Ecumenical Patriarch Bartholomew I, issued a joint declaration at the end of Francis' visit to Turkey demanding an end to violent persecution of Christians in the Middle East and calling for dialogue with Muslims. Former U.S. poet laureate Mark Strand, 80, died in New York. Anthony Marshall, 90, a decorated World War II veteran, diplomat and Broadway producer who saw his aristocratic life unravel as he was convicted in 1990 of raiding the fortune of his socialite mother, Brooke Astor, died in New York.

Today's Birthdays: Actor Robert Guillaume is 88. Radio talk show host G. Gordon Liddy is 85. Country singer-recording executive Jimmy Bowen is 78. Movie director Ridley Scott is 78. Movie writer-director Terrence Malick is 72. Rock musician Roger Glover (Deep Purple) is 70. Playwright David Mamet (MA'-meht) is 68. Actress Margaret Whitton is 65. Actor Mandy Patinkin is 63. Musician Shuggie Otis is 62. Country singer Jeannie Kendall is 61. Singer Billy Idol is 60. Historian Michael Beschloss is 60. Rock musician John Ashton (The Psychedelic Furs) is 58. Comedian Colin Mochrie is 58. Former football and baseball player Bo Jackson is 53. Rapper Jalil (Whodini) is 52. Actor-director Ben Stiller is 50. Rock musician Mike Stone is 46. Actress Sandra Oh is 45. Singer Clay Aiken is 37. Actor Billy Lush is 34. Actress Elisha Cuthbert is 33. Actress Kaley Cuoco (KWOH'-koh) is 30. Model Chrissy Teigen is 30. Actress Christel Khalil is 28. Actress Rebecca Rittenhouse (TV: "Blood & Oil") is 27. Actress Adelaide Clemens is 26.

Thought for Today: "Civilization is the limitless multiplication of unnecessary necessities." - Mark Twain (1835-1910).